

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

Miss. Baptists targeted in Human Rights Campaign project

JACKSON, Miss. (BP and local reports) — A \$310,000 public relations blitz by the pro-homosexual Human Rights Campaign (HRC) aimed at convincing Mississippians — and Mississippi Baptists in particular — that homosexuality is not inconsistent with Christianity has been deemed inaccurate and dangerous by Baptist leaders in the state.

HRC cited the large number of Baptists in Mississippi as a reason for focusing on faith during its \$310,000 statewide campaign, which will also include billboards, online advertisements, direct mail, and person-to-person engagement, the Clarion-Ledger reported.

The effort is part of a larger \$8.5 million, three-year campaign to increase acceptance of homosexuality in Mississippi, Alabama, and Arkansas, the Hattiesburg American newspaper reported.

HRC's All God's Children project began airing television ads on Nov. 10 in Jackson featuring Mississippians who endorse so-called "equal rights" for homosexuals. Among those featured are two Mississippi Baptists: Stan Wilson, pastor of Northside Church in Clinton,

and Mary Jane Kennedy, whom The Clarion-Ledger newspaper in Jackson referred to as "a Southern Baptist Sunday School teacher... from Florence."

Northside Church is listed as a cooperating church on the website of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a group that formed in the early 1990s in opposition to the Southern Baptist Convention's theologically conservative direction.

Northside Church contributed \$250 through Southern

Baptists' Cooperative Program in the year between Oct. 1, 2013 and Sept. 30, 2014, according to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. By virtue of that contribution, the church is listed as a cooperating member of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Rankin Association in Pearl confirmed to Baptist Press (BP) that Kennedy lives in the area, but a church where she is believed to attend did not respond to BP's request for information before deadline.

HRC spokesman Brad Clark told the Clarion-Ledger that one of the campaign's messages "is that we're all God's children, and it's up to God to judge, not us."

Chas Rowland, pastor of Bonina Church near Vicksburg, told BP, "There is an inherent rejection of the Gospel when we do not affirm [the] biblical [vision of] human sexuality, especially as it's portrayed in marriage because marriage is the greatest illustration that God has given us of Himself and how He loves the church."

Rowland is a board member of the Christian Action Commission, an agency of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. He said HRC's attempt to normalize homosexuality does not align with the views of most Mississippi Baptists despite the identification of some as personalities as Southern Baptists.

"There is no doubt where Mississippi Baptists stand," Rowland said. "We 'affirm biblical marriage.'

Messengers to the annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention in late October adopted two resolutions defending the traditional Christian views of marriage, gender, and sexuality. One resolution

declared that "the family is rooted in God's gift of marriage, which the Creator defines as the lifelong union of one man and one woman." Messengers reaffirmed their "commitment to biblical marriage," according to the resolution.

A separate resolution opposed "steadfastly all efforts by any governing official or body to validate transgender identity as morally praiseworthy" and invited "all who consider themselves transgender persons and who struggle with gender identity to trust in Christ and to experience renewal in the Gospel."

The resolution welcomed transgender persons to attend Mississippi Baptist churches and said they can be received into church membership if they repent of their sins and believe the Gospel.

In addition to passing resolutions, Rowland believes the Mississippi convention must amend its governing documents to declare, like the SBC

has done, that churches which affirm, approve, or endorse homosexual behavior are not in friendly cooperation.

"The rejection of confessional, baptistic cooperation leads to arguments over majority opinion rather than clearly articulating Gospel truth in Christian unity," Rowland said. "A failure to stand firm against homosexuality will result in loss of the culture wars and eternal destruction of souls who need to hear the message of grace and repentance, he said.

"People's souls are more important than political correctness," Rowland said. "We've just got to have some courage and stand up and speak the truth."

William Perkins, editor of The Baptist Record newsjournal of the Mississippi Baptist Convention and spokesman for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, told BP he attempted to contact HRC four times and never received a phone call or e-mail in return.

Perkins said HRC seems not to "want to develop any sort of contacts within the religious community" despite its use of

see HUMAN RIGHTS on p. 4

R. Orman returning to his native Mississippi

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor



West Point native Roger Orman will be returning to his home state to lead the Sunday School Department of the Mississippi Baptist

Convention Board — with expanded responsibilities.

"There is a great need for churches to focus on how to make bold disciples," Steve Stone, associate executive director for church growth at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, told the MBCB Ex-

ecutive Committee on Oct. 21. "With Roger's passion and skill in discipleship, and Sunday School being the entry point for making disciples, I recommend we refocus the work of our Sunday School Department with an emphasis in discipleship as well as involving all our MBCB departments in this discipleship endeavor.

"With the changing church culture, I believe Roger will bring a fresh vision for Sunday School and a comprehensive plan to create a Discipleship Development Center at MBCB."

Orman has served since 2000 as associate executive director of the South Carolina Baptist Convention. Prior to that, he served as:

* executive pastor: minister of education and administra-

tion for North Trenholm Church in Columbia, S.C. (1990-2000).

* associate pastor: minister of youth for Central Bearden Church in Knoxville, Tenn. (1988-90).

* associate pastor: minister to youth and students at First Church in Longview, Texas (1986-1988).

* associate pastor: minister to youth and students at Broadmoor Church in Memphis (1982-86).

* associate pastor: minister of education and youth at Audubon Park Church in Memphis (1980-82).

* instructor of religion, speech, and dramatic arts at Judson College in Marion, Ala. (1979-80).

Orman holds a master of arts in religious education ('79)

from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, and a bachelor of science in speech education ('75) from Mississippi State University in Starkville.

He has been married to the former Patti Cox, also a West Point native, for 34 years. They have three adult children and two grandchildren.

"Coming to my home state is yet another testimony to the greatness of the Lord," Orman said. "My heart hope is to serve the churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission. Changed lives are our purpose, and partnering together is a part of His plan."

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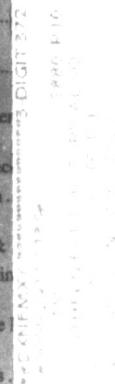
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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

The gauntlet thrown

In the days of hand-to-hand conflicts, gauntlets were fortified gloves that protected a combatant's hands and arms from the blows of an opponent's sharp-edged weapons. When a medieval knight threw down his gauntlet, it was to challenge his opponent to a duel. If the opponent picked up the glove, the contest was on.

Knights, gauntlets, and duels may be relics of the past, but Mississippi Baptists earlier this week figuratively received just such a challenge in a more modern context when the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) threw down a virtual gauntlet by announcing that people of faith – and Baptists in particular – will be the targets of a \$310,000 multimedia project to convince us that LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) citizens of the state are deserving of "equal rights."

Will Baptists pick up the gauntlet? "All God's Children [the name of the HRC project] was built to test a replicable model that can be used to move people of faith on LGBT issues throughout the South. According to Gallup, Mississippi is the most religious state in America, and it's believed that an estimated 55% of its population is Baptist," according to a Nov. 10 press release from HRC that detailed the project.

Over the next four weeks, All God's Children will utilize television advertisements, direct mail, phone bank operations, telephone town halls, billboards, online advertising, and door-to-door canvassing to get their message across, the press release states.

The advertising blitz features at least two Mississippi Baptists among the six slickly-produced TV commercials: Stan Wilson, pastor of Northside Church in Clinton, and Mary Jane Kennedy of Florence.

HRC promotional material says of Wilson, "For his congregation, all LGBT people are welcomed into his church. Pastor Wilson knows that his faith encourages him to speak up for the dignity of all people and that no one should deny LGBT people a place at God's table."

The same promotional material describes Kennedy as a Southern Baptist who "has taught Bible study and Sunday school at her church. She's also a stay-at-home mother who has lived in Mississippi for most of her life. Through deep personal prayer and reflection, she

believes that her faith compels her to love her fellow human beings and value the worth of all."

Kennedy's church membership and standing as a Baptist Bible teacher and Sunday School leader could not be ascertained by deadline for this issue of *The Baptist Record*.

Media savvy and well-funded, HRC has challenged Mississippi Baptists to a duel of ideas for the values and principles of our state well into the future – including even the very definition of morality.

There is at least one fact that cannot be ignored: The vast majority of the 2,149 member churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention would fall within the parameters of The Baptist Faith and Message of the Southern Baptist Convention which states, "In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose... all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography." (Section XV) The Baptist Faith and Message also states, "Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime." (Section XVIII).

It would be difficult for anyone to misinterpret those passages to represent that most Mississippi Baptists would be anything but fully opposed to the HRC's efforts in this state. \$310,000 is a lot of money to spend on a program that is doomed to fail.

Contained within the militant overtones of the beloved hymn of old, *Onward Christian Soldiers*, there is the line, "Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before." Whenever we are called into battle, as we have been in this instance, we must keep the cross of Jesus in front of us so we don't lose our way – and in the coming days and months, it will be an easy thing to lose our way.

We will likely be baited, mischaracterized, insulted, ignored, offended, marginalized, and possibly threatened. Even so, we must conduct ourselves as Christians in the midst of the battle. That's one of the meanings of the line from the hymn.

May they know us by our love and unshakable concern for their eternal souls (Matt. 28:18-20). After what our Savior did for us, it's the least we can do for Him. Otherwise, don't show up for the battle.

Don't forget about The Wedding

When we talk about marriage, it's easy to overlook a key component in the discussion: The Wedding.

I am convinced that the current state of weddings in the Western world has been instrumental in leading us to where we find ourselves today, with a high divorce rate and an unending argument about the meaning of marriage. Weddings are far from the only factor, but they contribute nonetheless and I think we should take a closer look.

For centuries in Western countries, weddings, and therefore marriages, were the domain of the church, be it Catholic or Protestant. In the Protestant church, wedding vows were universal, taken from the Book of Common Prayer and determined by the diligent study and arguments of many over the years.

There was a commonality to marriage. If everyone said the same vows, then marriage meant the same thing universally.

Fast-forward to present day. Just about anyone can become licensed to perform a wedding. No vows even have to be made. The meaning of marriage is up to each couple (or person) to determine. In a society that places a premium on individuality, marriage can mean one of a thousand different things.

Somehow we have to justify our decision to get married, so we determine why marriage is important to us and go for it.

It is worthwhile to ask why getting married is important to people who don't see any inherent, universal value or meaning within the institution. Maybe we see the wedding industry and want the thrill of a wedding. Maybe it's the rights and value assigned to being married rather than living together. Perhaps we want what our grandparents or parents had, or we like the legitimacy of being married.

So we work through these questions, create a wedding around our answers, and present to our guests our own unique version of "marriage." If marriage is merely a construct of society, then each society, and each member therein, can determine why it is important and what it will look like in his or her own context.

Where this doesn't make sense is in the church. When we talk about the future of marriage in the church, we cannot make the mistake of overlooking our weddings. The Bible begins and ends with a wedding.

Throughout both the Old and New Testaments we see that God's creation and institution of marriage was for a greater purpose. The one-flesh union of Adam and Eve in



Guest opinion
with Catherine Parks

Genesis points all the way to the culmination of the church's union with Christ in Revelation 19. Marriage was created so we might understand how dearly God loves us.

Marriage matters. If the wedding is day one of the marriage, then it matters too. When a man and a woman choose to vow our love and devotion to one another with words that reflect God's design for marriage, we are starting our lives together on a firm foundation.

When we proclaim that our ability to keep our vows is dependent on the grace of God, we are setting up a cornerstone to which we can look back when difficult days and years come. Though we will fail to be like Christ in all things, the grace of God will point us to the constant need to extend and receive forgiveness with our spouses.

When we gather with friends and family in corporate worship in our wedding ceremony, we are demonstrating the reality that our particular marriage is not just about us. We are saying it is about the glory of God, and it is dependent upon the encouragement and support of the church.

My prayer is that the church might come alongside engaged couples and encourage them in the freedom of how truly meaningful a wedding can be. I believe Christian weddings can be the most joyful, reverent, and celebratory events we have the privilege of witnessing.

Perhaps as we embrace and proclaim the meaning of marriage in our weddings, we will build a firm foundation for marriages that by His grace point to Christ, build strong families, and transform the world.

Parks lives in Nashville with her husband and two young children. She is the coauthor with Linda Strode of *A Christ-Centered Wedding: rejoicing in the Gospel on Your Big Day* (B&H Publishing Group, 2014). This column first appeared at the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission's website, erlc.com, and appears here courtesy of Baptist Press.

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BAPTISTS

PUBLISHED WEEKLY EXCEPT WEEKS OF JULY 4 AND CHRISTMAS BY THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION BOARD, 515 MISSISSIPPI STREET, JACKSON, MS 39201. SUBSCRIPTION \$10.35 PER YEAR PAYABLE IN ADVANCE. ECONOMY PLANS AVAILABLE FOR COOPERATING MISSISSIPPI CHURCHES. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT JACKSON, MS. MEMBER, ASSOCIATION OF STATE BAPTIST PAPERS. DEADLINES: NEWS ITEMS — ONE CALENDAR WEEK PRIOR TO REQUESTED PUBLICATION DATE. ADVERTISING — TWO CALENDAR WEEKS PRIOR TO REQUESTED PUBLICATION DATE. ALL SUBMISSIONS ARE SUBJECT TO EDITING.

Passages in our time: Remember The Wall?

BERLIN, Germany (BP) — A frenzied crowd danced on the wall separating East Berlin and West Berlin 25 years ago, celebrating a long-sought victory for freedom. Men and women, children and youth, proletarian and elite, joined the protesters to literally pick the wall apart piece by piece with chisels and axes and bloodied fingers.

Nov. 9, 1989, harkened a new era of democracy, freedom from communist repression, and hope for a more peaceful and democratic world. For Christians, however, this day meant so much more than political change.

The crumbling wall represented a spiritual victory and an opportunity to take the light of Christ into the darkness that had been cloaking Eastern Europe for decades. For the first time, an entire generation of Eastern Europeans was able to hear the Gospel and respond without fear of persecution.

Mark Edworthy, International Mission Board (IMB) affinity strategy leader for Europe, stood at the remains of the wall a few months later with a hammer and chisel, eager to do his part in dismantling the barrier.

"The wall was an outward symbol of an inward reality. Communism had erected a spiritual barrier with its incessant denial of God's existence and its cycle of cruelty. Spiritually, we eagerly took up a hammer and chisel to work against that greater barrier," Edworthy said.

Katie and Shannon Ford, IMB missionaries serving in Ukraine, are former U.S. military personnel who were stationed in Germany when the wall fell.

"It was a tense time for military personnel, not knowing if there would be an attempt to

regain control — much like what happened in Ukraine when the government collapsed earlier this year," Shannon said. "What captured our hearts to come to this part of the world to serve was the flood of people from the East seeking a new life."

Seeking a new life in the early days of freedom resulted in a spiritual revival. Those denied access to Christian witness for so long responded to the Gospel with gratitude and joy. Church doors were reopened, hidden faith was expressed and new faith was born.

However, the crumbling wall also allowed the secular world access to people's hearts.

As new products appeared in the store windows, consumers lacked resources to partake. Their empty pocketbooks led to greed and bitterness. Corruption in society flourished, as the heavy hand of communism wasn't there to repress it.

Mafia power rings popped up in many countries, and repression moved from the government suites to the streets. For many, hopelessness replaced fear and suicide rates increased.

Churches struggled to evangelize the communities around them. After years of knowing Big Brother was watching, it was difficult for the church to open its doors and welcome lost neighbors and hard to live their faith openly without fear of repression.

Missionaries flooded former communist countries and took on the role of teaching the church to be the church again. Church planters, human needs workers, evangelists, and teachers all rushed in to lend a hand and train the next generation.

Droves of nurses, doctors, and childcare specialists came to minister to orphans, the elderly, and villagers while



QUARTER CENTURY AGO — A message scrawled on the Berlin Wall reads, "Walls are not everlasting." This photo, taken by an IMB missionary 25 years ago, was taken the day the wall came down. (BP photo courtesy of International Mission Board archives)

sharing with them the hope of Christ.

Today the church has grown numerically and spiritually. "Two things have greatly changed since the early 1990s. First, we have a generation who never lived under communism, and the influx of capitalism and freedoms have brought swift change inside and outside the church.

"Second, Baptists and other denominations have developed their infrastructure for Christian education and missions," Ford said.

Camps, seminaries, colleges, new church buildings, publishing houses, and Christian bookstores are not uncommon now. Discipleship, evangelism, and a missionary mindset are the result of this new Christian influence.

Mick Stockwell, IMB strategy training associate for Europe, has witnessed the changes over the last 25 years and is heartened by what God is doing. "Even though political and economic struggles remain, the Gospel is breaking free from the

chains of former communism to new frontiers.

"Churches in Eastern Europe are engaging in cross-cultural missions by sending short-term mission teams and developing strategies for sending long-term missionaries."

Today, evangelical leaders from Romania, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Albania, and Russia not only have planted multiple churches in their own countries but are actively pursuing efforts to win the world for Christ.

"Nearly 25 years later, we can see greater trophies than stone and mortar as the Lord has continued to build His church throughout the former Soviet sphere," Edworthy said. "Our constant prayer is that the Lord of the harvest will send more workers."

There is a sense of urgency and purpose in the work, especially in Eastern Europe, because no one knows how long the door to some of the countries will remain open. The ongoing war in Ukraine highlights the fact that, although the Cold

War is over, communism and other secular philosophies are still at work.

Christians who are now in positions of leadership in society have a mandate to use their influence to continue cultivating change.

"We are seeing young Christian men becoming leaders in business and other professional fields," Ford said. "This opens up new areas of influence for the Gospel, so the church has to be ready to equip this generation to be salt and light in the workplace while making use of freedoms to pursue education and opportunities that their parents and grandparents were rarely afforded."

Key prayer requests from the region:

- Pray for emerging national partners who want to seize opportunities to spread the Gospel where they have unique opportunities.

- Pray for theological and missional leaders to train the next generation of missionaries.

- Pray for God's Word to flourish while there is time.

Wall may be down, but many Berliners still struggle

BERLIN, Germany (BP)

— On Nov. 9, 1989, East German border guards stood by dumbfounded as streams of East Berliners flooded through Brandenburg Gate into the ecstatic freedom of West Berlin. Pam and Wayne Jenkins knew things would never be the same.

That evening, 25 years ago, the Jenkins family sat in their living room in Regensburg, West Germany, and watched the unbelievable events unfold on the evening news. A few weeks later, Wayne traveled to Berlin to stand in front of the wall and see its remnants firsthand.

When the Jenkinses, the first International Mission Board

(IMB) missionaries appointed to German-language work, arrived in December 1982, people were being sent to jail in East Germany for openly sharing the Gospel. Jenkins himself was detained for several hours in 1986 for carrying Gospel tracts in his pockets during a journey to East Berlin.

As Wayne and Pam watched the flood of East Berliners enter West Berlin, they hoped for wide-open doors to share more freely. Although open evangelism was illegal prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, Christianity was not. In fact, there are many who credit Christians — and specifically the prayer meetings in Leipzig, East Germany, called

the Friedensgebet (Prayer for Peace) — with spearheading the peaceful revolt against the Soviets and the wall.

As often happens in times of persecution, in various ways the church in East Germany was thriving behind the Iron Curtain. Now, with religious freedom, it has struggled.

Jason Dietz, currently serving with IMB in Dresden, Germany, notes, "For over 100 years, [East Germans] have seen so much drastic change brought on by competing ideologies that now a spirit of cynicism and distrust has spread over the population."

Despite the credit the Friedensgebet meetings received

for emboldening anti-Soviet protests, they have had little lasting effect on the invisible spiritual barriers in the former East Germany. Rather than experiencing relief at the religious freedoms now available, people tend to view all structured belief systems with suspicion and mistrust, which is proving to be a major obstacle to the Gospel.

Berlin's political and physical walls have been down for 25 years, yet the spiritual walls are still standing strong. While the church saw rapid growth in Eastern Europe following the fall of the Iron Curtain, the church in Germany and throughout Western Europe has steadily declined. When not

viewed with distrust and skepticism, the church and Bible are viewed now as merely a good moral code or ethic rather than a living faith. Missionaries in Western Europe face increasing difficulties in confronting the spiritual walls of materialism, consumerism, depravity, and distrust.

"Just because Europe is covered with church buildings doesn't mean it is full of Christians," Jenkins laments.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will move to complete the task of bringing true freedom to people in the former East Germany, once and for all tearing down the wall preventing them from saving faith in Jesus Christ.

According to Jesus in Matthew 25 one of the evidences that we belong to Him is that we care for others. But it is more than just caring, it is a Christ kind of caring, a unique kind of caring. Caregiving in America is big business and there are some fine places doing a fabulous job to care for the needs of folks. Usually when we think of caregiving it has to do with tragedies that have happened in someone's life or end of life needs. While virtually all of us will at some point need someone who will give care to us, it is also true that every one of us will probably have opportunities to care for others. According to Jesus, His people will have cared physically, spiritually, emotionally, institutionally, personally, practically and it is a care that is given to someone not because they are of great importance or have the largest need, but they may be the least known and important and their need may be simply oppressive loneliness.

In our world today with specialized care provided by various institutions and agencies such as hospice and memory care facilities, there are some great folks highly skilled and providing and deeply caring who share on the front lines of needs whether they be accident related or a disease that is taking life and energy or memory away. These institutions may do a great work, and the people there may genuinely care, but often it is the caregiver who unknowingly loses out on the opportunity to be a blessing and thereby share their love and receive an overwhelming blessing. According to Jesus, His followers have a different approach to caregiving that is beyond simply doing a task or following orders.

One, Christian caregiving involves staying aware. Listen to Jesus as He talks about His followers connecting with needs – someone was hungry and they fed them; thirsty and they went out of the way to give them something to drink; they were sick and unable to get out and about and they went to them; they were locked up in prison and the



Directions
With Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Christian Caregiving

Jesus people found a way to get past the bars and the locked doors to care. In the fast paced activities of work and life and raising kids and rushing to appointments, we lose some of our sensitivity and someone may quietly drop out of society and we do not even notice. We may have heard about it, but we assume that probably later they will be back. Time passes and our awareness continues to be lower and then we hear they're gone.

Secondly, Christian caregiving offers care. It is a caring simply because you care, not because the person is of high standing in society or because they can reciprocate and help you in any way, but simply because you love. Almost a year ago, Dr. Earl Kelly who was executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention in the years of his service, went home to be with the Lord. He was an outstanding preacher, a thoughtful leader, and a dear friend. Some years ago he and I were to be in a meeting together in another state. He was hesitant about going to the meeting because his wife, Marjorie, was in a care facility in the latter stages of Alzheimer's. But with the encouragement of others and since he would only be gone a couple of days, he agreed to attend the meeting. We

got to the meeting on Monday evening and on Tuesday morning at breakfast he came to me and said, "Jim, I've got to go back." I said, "Did something happen?" He said, "Well, no, but I've got to go back and take care of Marjorie." I said, "Dr. Kelly, I understand, but she is being taken care of." He said, "I know that, but I need to be there and take care of her." Then, thoughtfully and reflectively he said, "She does not know me and she will not even know that I am there, but I will." And I encouraged him to leave. You see, Christian caregiving is built not on the other person's love, care and even knowledge, but on the giver's care, understanding and love.

I know that dealing with some of these diseases and issues in life are so taxing and draining to the caregiver to the point that I have at times seen people who get so frustrated, even angry, because a person can't remember one minute to the next or respond in a way that they used to. But this kind of caring and giving is not about them, it is about us loving. It actually is not about their condition or what put them there, it's about us loving. In an incredibleparable Jesus told about the man who was beaten up and left for dead on the side of the road. The story we call The Good

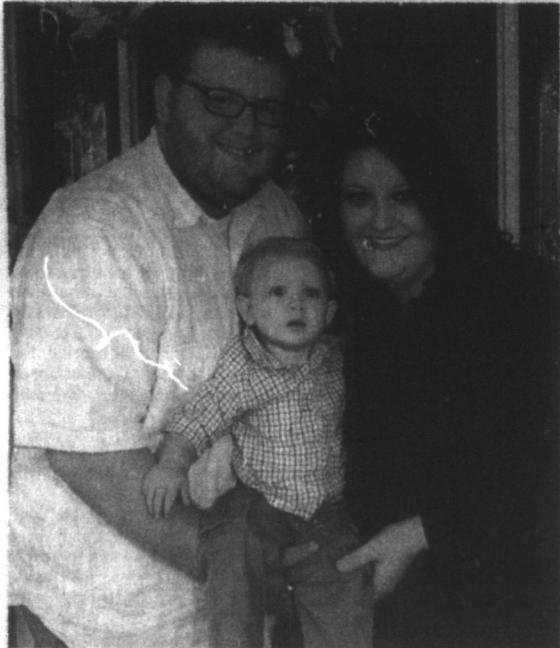
Samaritan has in it some interesting reflections about helping folks when you see them, for there were two different people who passed by and saw the man and saw the need and went on. Now in truth, one or both of those guys is probably us. How many times are we aware of a need and we're even in a position to help and we may even have a tinge of want-to in us, but it is so easy to pretend that we didn't see it, didn't know it, walk on by instead of taking a moment simply to love.

One last thought about Christian caregiving that I would like to share with you and that is this kind of caregiving remembers prayer. Actually, prayer is not mentioned in Jesus' end of the world account in Matthew 25, but it's a part of you and me. How many times have we asked the Lord to use us? Even in our prayer we realize we're not significant in the world and may not have a big circle of influence, but just ask God to guide us during the day and use us. And so we head out into our world, whether it's just taking care of things at the home or going to a meeting at church or meeting with some friends or being with our family; invariably on the way, or where we are there are those moments and opportunities. People call them choice points where you face a choice of simply taking that few seconds or a minute or even a few minutes to do what you had asked God to give you opportunity to do and there it is, right there at your fingertips.

And now you have the choice, a kind word, a cup of water, pause to see if you can make a difference with someone, a note of thanks, a heart of rejoicing, choice points. You will see some today, no doubt, and it may involve people you know or that you've never seen before. All of a sudden, right there in clear view is your call from God to provide Christian caregiving. Don't miss your chance today to be a blessing.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

Staff Changes



CENTRAL CHURCH, MCCOMB, has called Tyler Selby as minister of music. He is shown with his wife Grace and son Carter.

HUMAN RIGHTS

cont. from p. 1

faith-based language in videos and ads.

In a statement to the Clarion-Ledger, Perkins said, "On [homosexuality], the vast majority of the 2,149 member churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention would fall within the parameters of The Baptist Faith and Message of the Southern Baptist Convention which states, 'In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose ... all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography' (Article XV).

The Baptist Faith and Message also states, 'Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime' (Article XVIII).

"It is difficult to misinterpret those passages to represent that most Mississippi Baptists would be anything but fully opposed to the Human Rights Campaign's efforts in this state. \$300,000 is a lot of money to spend on a program that is doomed to fail."

Russell D. Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville and a Biloxi native, told BP in written comments that Christians should prepare for additional efforts in the Bible Belt to position homosexual behavior as normal.

"This sort of campaign will only continue. Red states and Bible Belts do not provide adequate protection from these cultural trends. The response must be churches preaching and articulating a Christian vision of sexuality as rightly expressed in the one-flesh union of a man and a woman," Moore said.

"Our [preaching] must not stop at morals but go on to show how marriage is rooted in the Gospel, as a picture of Christ and the church. And our churches must be, like Jesus and His apostles, those who call for repentance of sin and those who offer mercy to all who come to Christ in repentance and faith," he said.

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

November 13, 2014

Matthew 10:27 NAS

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.



YOUTH EVANGELISM
CHALLENGE

DECEMBER 29-30

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE
PARKS 29 AT 1:30 P.M.
PARKS 30 AT 2:30 P.M.

SPEAKER

DANNY LANIER

SPEAKER

ED NEWTON

ILLUSIONIST

DREW WORSHAM

WORSHIP

CASSIDY CRENSHAW
BAND

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE
EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT
OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION BOARD
AT 800-748-1651, EXT. 278, OR 601-968-3800

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send?
And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" Isaiah 6:8

IF NOT ME
WHO?
IF NOT NOW
WHEN?

2015
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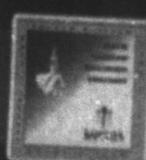
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2015

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ISAIAH 6:8

2015 STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

JANUARY 25-26, 2015 | BRANDON BAPTIST CHURCH, BRANDON

Sponsored by the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

For more information contact the Evangelism Department at 800-748-1651, ext. 270, or 601-292-3278.

WORKS FOR

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What does it cost? Nothing except a few hours of your time.

Register by e-mailing Rene Edwards at renewards@mbcb.org or call her at 1-800-748-1651. Please let her know your name, your church, and which location you'll be attending.

LOCATIONS

Thursday, October 23, 2014 6 - 8:45 p.m. First Baptist Church, Vicksburg, MS
Monday, November 17, 2014 6 - 8:45 p.m. First Baptist Church, Marks, MS
Thursday, November 20, 2014 6 - 8:45 p.m. Lowrey Memorial Baptist Church Blue Mtn., MS

For more information contact the Discipleship/Family Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, PO Box 830, Jackson, MS 39205-0830 800-748-1651, ext. 283, or 601-292-3263.



March 20-21, 2015 | Broadmoor Baptist Church, Madison, Mississippi

Awards Competition

- Entries in the Awards Competition must have been produced or aired between January 1, 2014 – January 1, 2015
- Award Entry Deadline is January 23, 2015
- Entry form and registration is online

Banquet and Workshop

- Banquet and Workshop Registration Deadline is March 6, 2015
- Registration for all activities (Banquet and Workshop) is: \$35 per person
- Friday Awards Banquet only or Saturday Workshop only is \$25 per person

WATCH FOR MORE INFORMATION COMING TO YOUR MAILBOX SOON!
www.mbc.org

Follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MSBaptists>

Contact Communication Services of the MBCB for more information at 800-748-1651, ext. 378, or jchen@mbcb.org

2015 CLM RETREAT

MARCH 27-28, 2015
Goreywa Camp & Conference Center
Clinton, Miss.

Registration opens at 8:30 a.m., March 27,
with classes ending at noon, March 28

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
MARCH 13, 2015**

Cost: \$149 per person for two people to a room
(includes conference fee, meals and lodging)

Registration opening soon on our Web site.

For more information contact
Communication Services at
601-292-3378.

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2015

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FEBRUARY 27-28, 2015

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, VICKSBURG | FEBRUARY 27-28, 2015
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Registration deadlines February 6, 2015

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IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS!

Walk through any local shopping center and you will see Christmas decorations already on display. As you begin to think about the Christmas gifts you will buy, please consider shopping at WorldCrafts.org. WorldCrafts is a fair-trade, non-profit ministry of WMU that helps artisans around the world earn a living wage. This Christmas your gifts could bless the recipient while changing the life of someone living on the other side of the world. For help with WorldCrafts please call Tammy Anderson in the state WMU office at 800-748-1651, ext. 323, or tanderson@mbcb.org.



DINNER 2015

REGION 1

NEW ORLEANS, Vicksburg, Jackson,
Greenville, Corinth, Kosciusko

August 20-22, 2015

REGION 2

ATLANTA, Birmingham, Mobile,
Tuscaloosa, Pensacola, Dothan

September 10-12, 2015

REGION 3

MEMPHIS, NASHVILLE, BIRMINGHAM,
JACKSON, HATTIESBURG, Vicksburg,
MONROVIA, MS

October 1-3, 2015

REGION 4

MEMPHIS, NASHVILLE, BIRMINGHAM,
JACKSON, HATTIESBURG, Vicksburg,
MONROVIA, MS

October 1-3, 2015

REGION 5

MEMPHIS, NASHVILLE, BIRMINGHAM,
JACKSON, HATTIESBURG, Vicksburg,
MONROVIA, MS

October 1-3, 2015

FEATURING

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Pray this day for...

"Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls." 1 Peter 1:8-9

Pray for: **John & Sarah Perkins**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through mission support, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Michael & Sarah Prewitt**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **John & Amy Puri**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through volunteer coordination, community outreach.

Pray for: **Eugenia & Tracy Putnam**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting.

Pray for: **L & M.**, missionaries to European Peoples

20

Pray for: **Stephen & Svetlana Parish**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Kevin & Brenda Peacock**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through theological education, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Ruth & Steven Robertson**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through financial administration, church/home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for: **Bethany Sharp**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through community outreach/evangelism.

Pray for: **George & Geraldine Smith**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church planting, church/home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for: **Thomas & Janna Smith**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church planting and regional office support.

Pray for: **Clay & Jeri Stegall**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Jeanette Taylor**, missionary ministering to Southeast Asian Peoples through regional office support.

Pray for: **Karl & Peggy Wallace**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through mission administration & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **David & Reginald White**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church planting & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Floyd & Sylvia Wingo**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Shannon & Charlie Worthy**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples.

Pray for: **James & Mary Adair**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church planting & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Mark & Karen Alexander**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples.

The IMB missionaries listed in the House Tops prayer calendar are currently active in 2-4 year terms or in career service.

2015 AREA & STATE KEYBOARD FESTIVALS

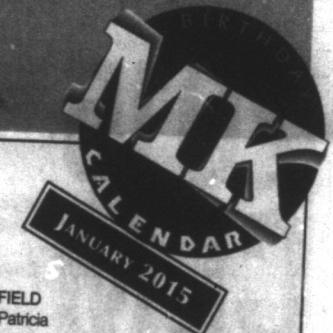
Thursday, January 29, 2015 — 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

FBC, 300 N. Church St, Tupelo, 38804
 FBC, 202 7th St. N, Columbus, 39703
 Tylertown BC, 409 Tyler Ave, Tylertown, 39667
 FBC, 431 N. State St, Jackson, 39201
 Poplar Springs Dr. BC, 4032 Poplar Springs Dr, Meridian, 39305
 Petal-Harvey BC, 600 South Main St, Petal, 39465
 FBC, 902 Live Oak Ave, Pascagoula, 39567
 FBC, 607 W. 5th St, Laurel, 39442

Friday, January 30, 2015 — 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
 Longview Heights BC, 4501 Goodman Rd, Olive Branch, 38654

Saturday, January 31, 2015 — 9:30 a.m. - noon
 FBC, 450 Faith Dr, Grenada, 38901
 North Greenwood BC, 615 Grand Blvd., Greenwood, 38930

For more information contact the Church Music Department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at 1-800-748-1651, ext. 267, or 601-292-3267



1/3/96
MISS KATELYN R. BROWN
 Parents: Donald & Donna
 European Peoples

1/4/12
MR. TITUS D.
 Parents: K & C
 Restricted

1/21/97
MR. CALEB HOLYFIELD
 Parents: Michael & Patricia
 European Peoples

1/4/11
MISS RYLEIGH ROBERTS
 Parents: Steve & Nickolee
 Sub-Saharan African Peoples

1/30/94
MISS SHANNON
 Parents: B & A
 Restricted

1/4/11
MR. WYATT
 Parents: L & L
 Restricted

1/19/12
MR. TATE
 Parents: L & L
 Restricted

Encourage an MK with a card!

FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to:

MBCB WMU MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205.

PLEASE NOTE: Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the WMU. Individual cards do not need postage stamps when sent as a package to MS WMU.

Please be sure your cards arrive in WMU one month prior to the first date on this birthday list.

HOUSE TOPS

Just for the Record



GILLSBURG CHURCH, GILLSBURG, hosted an associational World Craft Fair celebrating Women's Day of Prayer and global mission efforts that support artisan groups worldwide. Shown are Ann Rials and Vicky Warren, Crystal Springs, displaying handmade items for purchase to attendees from Galilee, Gillsburg, Liberty, and Zion Hill.



FIRST CHURCH, RICHTON, recognizes its GA program. The church had no GA program for several years, but began mission organizations in August of 2013. The girls were presented with GA vests and badges earned.



WOODVILLE CHURCH, WOODVILLE, made a generous donation to the Wilkinson County Correctional Facility. The church raised more than \$1000 for Christmas care packages, as well as collecting personal hygiene items. Shown is chaplain Roscoe Barnes III with Nancy Payne, teacher for the church's Mission Friends; Girls in Action; and Royal Ambassadors.



MARS HILL CHURCH, PETAL, held a pastor appreciation event Oct. 12. Shown are pastor Craig Cluff and his wife Deanna. Cluff was honored with a special service and covered dish luncheon.

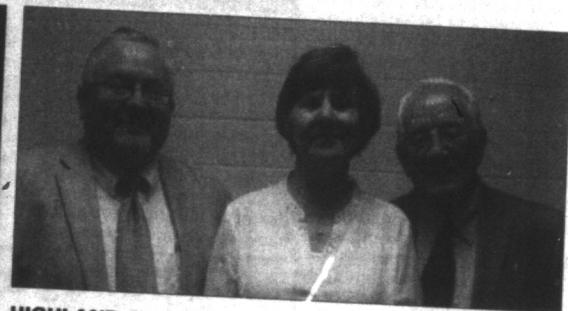


ENTERPRISE CHURCH, LIBERTY, honored pastor Ernest Whittington upon his retirement from 20 years of service. The church awarded him the title of Pastor Emeritus.

In other Church News:

► **First Church, Vicksburg**, exceeded its Margaret Lakey Offering goal by giving \$23,252.86 toward state missions.

► **Silver Creek Church, McComb**, will host a sportsman's banquet Nov. 19 at 6 p.m. featuring Paul Ott Carruth. Jambalaya will be served and door prizes given away for a \$10 donation at the door. For more information, call (601) 818-6544.



HIGHLAND CHURCH, MERIDIAN, celebrated the retirement of Bobbie Vick Oct. 26 after 40 years of faithful service as the church's financial secretary. She began work in November, 1974 and worked through the tenure of two previous pastors and numerous staff members. Shown are pastor Carl White, Vick; and Elwood Vick.



GRIFFITH MEMORIAL CHURCH, JACKSON, held a deacon ordination service Nov. 2. Two new deacons were ordained. Shown are Robert L. Killingsworth, pastor Andy Fullington, and Tony Hudgins.



IMMANUEL CHURCH, GREENWOOD, held a baby dedication Oct. 19.



ARLINGTON CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, visited the pumpkin patch Oct. 26, with 34 children and 13 adults participating. Matthew Green, pastor.

Golden Gate closes purchase in L.A.

ONTARIO, Calif. (BP) — Golden Gate Seminary has finalized the purchase of its new campus site east of Los Angeles near the Ontario International Airport. President Jeff Iorg announced Nov. 7 that the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) has been approved by the city of Ontario, removing the final condition on closing the sale.

"The planning and governmental processes leading to the closing have been very smooth," Iorg said. "We are about six weeks ahead of schedule in our planning process and are on track to meet the June 2016 relocation deadline."

The new site includes a six-story building, more than 700 parking places, and an adjacent lot legally entitled for a future building. The building was constructed in 2009 and has remained vacant due to the economic downturn. The exterior is finished, and all mechanical systems have been installed, but its interior is unfinished.

The building encompasses approximately 153,000 square feet while the future building already is entitled at 75,000 square feet. By comparison, the seminary's core campus buildings in Mill Valley in the San Francisco Bay Area are only 121,000 square feet. Thus, the building in Ontario is about 20% larger than the seminary's current facilities, with ample space for further growth.

"Our new campus will be very different than our former campus. It is a much more efficient use of space and resources," Iorg said. "A seminary for the 21st century needs space for students, faculty, library, worship and administration. We will soon have state-of-the-art facilities for all these purposes."

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically



plus the most advanced educational technology available.

"We will soon announce future plans for the new Bay Area campus as well as other changes and additions to facilitate our future ministry. These are exciting days to be at Golden Gate."

The seminary is in the process of requesting approval for a name change to Gateway Semi-

nary of the Southern Baptist Convention. The new name will require approval at two consecutive SBC annual meetings, beginning in 2015 in Columbus, Ohio.

Golden Gate Seminary also operates fully accredited campuses in Brea, Calif.; Phoenix; Denver; and in the Portland, Ore., area.

College News



WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY held a groundbreaking for a new men's residence hall on October 31 at the Hattiesburg campus. Participants in the turning of the shovels included (left to right) Jamie Holmes, WCU director of housing; Lydia Ulrich, WCU student government president; Williamson; Dr. King; WCU Trustees Joan Warren, Dr. Jules Eustice and Lewis Myrick; architect Kevin Lewis of Landry and Lewis; Bob Blevins, WCU director of facilities; and Larry J. Sumrall Contractors representative Jonathan McFee.

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mccb.org.

BIBLIOCRYPTER

KZQ SX AVG KHH FAKF SYHVYPY KUY

IREFVCVYQ CULG KHH FAVZBE, CULG

TAVMA XY MLRHQ ZLF SY IREFVCVYQ

SX FAY HKT LC GLEYE.

KMFE FAVUFYYZ: FAVUFXZVZY

Clue: S = B

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Philippians 1:6

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004. © 2005

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The Discipline of Suffering • Hebrews 12:1-7

Discipline is not a popular topic in today's relativistic environment (church or world) because discipline involves obedience to truth, right and wrong as dictated by an authority structure, and correction and admonishment. Our lesson for today involves the difficult and clear teaching on the role of suffering discipline involved in the maturing process of the disciple of Christ. The author begins by pointing backward to chapter 11 to all the heroes of the faith, and how this same divine procedure (suffering discipline) worked in them to encourage us through what we are experiencing.

Enduring (12:1-3) The cloud of witnesses are all those listed in 11:4-40, plus all the other great Disciples of the Lord that have followed, such as Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenaeus and so forth. As we live in the 21st century, God has preserved a written witness of these Christ followers and their trials and tribulations for encouragement to continue on in the faith, contending in the spiritual warfare that rages from generation to generation.

We are encouraged to run with endurance the spiritual race that is set before us... we are to lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely. What weight? What sin? We can fill in the blanks. For me, one of the weights is...weight. I'm not a severely

overweight man, but I could certainly afford to be in better shape at 45 with three children ten and under and an infant on the way. If I don't take care of my body, will I be able to properly father all my children, teaching them the unsearchable riches of Christ, until they are independent? Most likely, not.

Weight can also mean other things, possible relationships or occupations that are wrong for a believer. The principle is

that there may be something that is physically, mentally or spiritually weighing you down, causing you not to race at your full potential.

What sin is in question? Whatever it is that makes us "shrink back." What shortcoming in our life is it that causes us to hesitate in our service to God? Is it the sin of a bad-temper, some form of sexual immorality, apathy, laziness, pride or fear? Whatever it may be, we are admonished to run the

race while looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. What better example could there be than Christ, considering what he did? It's hard to understand

exactly all that Christ did for us, but if you have ever suffered any form of persecution for gospel truth, you can begin to understand

a little bit of

the rejection, betrayal and pain that he suffered...that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death... Phil 3:10. And this helps us to not lose heart...knowing that we are in company with him!

Disciplined (4-7) The question in verse 4 stops us dead in our tracks. No, many of us have not resisted in our struggle against sin to the point of shedding blood, in fact,

many of us would think that is unnecessary, as we have so bought into cheap grace. We think we can sin, sin, sin and God will just forgive us, grace abounding, with no consequences. By no means! We are to resist temptation no matter the form and look to Jesus! We must resist! And if we fall as believers, he will lovingly discipline us. Proverbs 3:11-12 is cited from the OT to testify to the consistency of the reality of the truth of discipline. The entire point is that all Fathers discipline their children, although the discipline is not perfect as humanity is fallen. God the Father however, disciplines in and to loving perfection. So, instead of the hardship that believers experience being a testimony to the absence of God's presence, the hardships experienced by believers is a testimony to the loving care and formative discipline of God which matures us into Christ.

Sometimes the only thing that makes discipline bearable for me is the truth of this passage. Every single moment we breath, God is preparing us for this life and the next...to see Jesus who is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hazzard is pastor of Woodland Church, Columbus.



Explore the Bible
with Shelby Hazzard

Overcome Bitterness • Genesis 45:3-11

If someone were to ask you, "Is there anyone you are bitter against for something they did to you or a family member?" would a face and situation quickly come to mind? And does rehearsing the memory cause a clenching of your teeth? I'm sure we each have one or more painful issues that have caused (or are still causing) great grief. Some believers have been able to address these issues and let them go; others have not. Scripture admonishes us to do the former: "Watch out that no bitterness takes root among you, for as it springs up it causes deep trouble, hurting many in their spiritual lives (Hebrews 12:15 LB)."

Much has transpired since our previous lesson ended with Genesis 41:40. The storehouses of Egypt were overflowing with grain, taken in during the seven years of abundant harvest, which occurred just as Joseph had predicted (Gen. 41:29). And just as he also predicted, the acute famine began. "There was famine in all the other lands, but in the whole land of Egypt there was food" (Gen. 41:54 NIV). As situations became dire, people from other countries flooded into Egypt to gain sustenance. Jacob's family also was in need, and the father sent his sons to acquire grain (Gen. 42:1-3).

Chapters 42-44 contain some of Scripture's most thrilling reading material, and taking time to review it will help tie last

week's lesson to this week's. Joseph created some traumatic experiences for his brothers, beginning with their initial meeting at one of the granaries. At first glance, this may seem cruel, but a more reasonable assumption would be that he is exposing them to the "refiner's fire" to test them; to see if the past

20 years have produced some much-needed character changes.

At the end of chapter 44, we find Judah, in response to Joseph's demand to leave Benjamin behind, offering to become the ruler's slave. (Remember, this was the brother who'd cooked up the scheme to sell Joseph into slavery, with which the rest of the brothers agreed; Gen. 37:26.) In this current scenario, the others must have shown such a desperate remorse as well, that "Joseph could no longer control himself" (45:1), and he commanded his attendants to leave his presence. With great weeping, he revealed himself to his siblings.

Joseph had changed so much and had been speaking to them through an interpreter (42:23), so as he asked about his father, the incredulous siblings "were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence" (45:3). Then, Joseph invited the group into his welcome embrace and shared words of forgiveness and encouragement: "do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was

to save lives that God sent me ahead of you" (vs. 5). He explained that the two years of famine would stretch to seven, and twice more (in vss. 7 and 8), he credits the hand of God for placing him in his powerful position. Joyfully, he hurried his brothers back to Canaan to move Jacob and the families to Egypt (vss. 9-11).

Considering Joseph's circumstances and his response to them can help us deal with bitterness. Over these past few weeks, we've noted him acknowledging God often.



Bible Studies for Life
with Ann Maniscalco

His steadfast faith recognized that nothing could touch him that hadn't been sifted through Jehovah's sovereign hands.

In "Joseph: Overcoming Life's Challenges" (Discovery House Publishers), author Bill Crowder was deeply moved when he heard of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bristol's incredible act of forgiveness: "They traveled [from Michigan] on their vacation to San Diego for the purpose of sharing Christ with a man in prison. The thing that made it so amazing was that this criminal was in jail for raping and murdering their precious daughter." Crowder says that act showed "a spirit of mercy born out of grace."

In our own strength, such overcoming of bitterness would be impossible, indeed. Our only hope is to abide in the living Vine. Jesus explains this vital union in John 15:5 (NASB): "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." So, we can stay in close union with our Lord, resulting in a life of righteousness ("bears much fruit"), or - by not facing our grudges as sin and allowing Christ to free us - stay oppressed by the weight of bitterness and unforgiveness. The choice is ours.

Maniscalco is a member of Lemoine Boulevard Church in Biloxi.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **First Church, Rolling Fork:** 125th anniversary, Nov. 16; fellowship time, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; music by Porgy & Bess, 6 p.m.; Ed Deuschle, speaker; Greg Bennett, music; Millard Caulder, sharing reflections.

► **Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto:** Youth revival, Nov. 19-21, 6:30 p.m.; Bobby McGuffie, speaker; Aaron Walker, music; Jason and Jenny Leggett, youth ministers; Hal Hatten, pastor.

► **Jericho Church, Guntown:** Homecoming, Nov. 16; service,

10 a.m., followed by potluck lunch; Charles Rogers, speaker; Marvin Robbins, pastor.

► **New Henleyfield Church, Canfield:** Revival, Nov. 16-19; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Randy Kuhn, speaker; Danny Johnson, music.

► **Ramah Church, McCall Creek:** Revival, Nov. 16-19; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

nightly; Huey Moak, speaker.

► **First Church, Belzoni:** Harvest Day/Homecoming, Nov. 16; service, 10 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; George Johnson, pastor and speaker; Jack Hollingsworth, music.

► **Line Creek Church, Kentwood, La.:** 175th anniversary, Nov. 23; for information, call (985) 229-8053.

► **Pleasant Grove Church, Vossburg:** Homecoming and revival, Nov. 16-19; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by potluck lunch and singing; Keith Bogan, speaker for homecoming; Mon.-Wed., 6:45 p.m.; Keith Stewart, Roger Pruitt, and William Chancellor, speakers; Howard Bennett and Shalon Brown, music.

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1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

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